

## **Corps Releases Interim Report on the Restructured Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway System Navigation Feasibility Study**

Today, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released a blueprint for moving forward with its plan to ensure that the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers continue to be a nationally treasured ecological resource, as well as an effective transportation system. The blueprint is included in the Corps' Interim Report of the restructured Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway System Navigation Feasibility Study.

The Study has been restructured to give equal consideration of fish and wildlife resources and navigation improvement planning consistent with recommendations from the National Research Council and the Federal Principals Group. The restructured study is addressing the navigation efficiency needs of the UMR-IWW system, the ongoing cumulative effects of navigation, and the ecosystem restoration needs with a goal of attaining an environmentally sustainable navigation system.

The Interim Report summarizes the results of the navigation feasibility study from its inception and provides a structure for completing the study to ensure the UMR-IWW system continues as a nationally significant ecosystem and a nationally significant commercial navigation system. The Interim Report is not a decision document, rather, it provides a history of past study activities; the purpose of the restructuring; initial plan formulation activities including establishment of goals, objectives and alternatives; and identifies implementation issues. Full economic and environmental evaluations will be contained in the final feasibility report scheduled for completion in 2004. The Interim Report and related information are available at: <http://www2.mvr.usace.army.mil/umr-iwwsns/>